
William S. Wilson

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For the Legislative Record

I own a composting operation some 43.5 miles east of this building. I began my operation in 1992 by taking hold of an opportunity the legislature afforded me with the initial Yard Waste Ban. My first contract was for the leaves from the City of Grand Rapids. As composters go, I am the little guy. Even though I have an 80 acre farm I compost on only about three acres of it and I have, besides myself, only two seasonal workers.

The economics of composting in Michigan necessitate a charge, "tip fee", for incoming yard waste and a charge for the outgoing finished compost product. In my 17 years of operating I have always had to charge a higher tip fee than the landfills. If the yard waste ban is rescinded, I do not expect to be able to stay in business. Neither I, nor anyone else, is able to compete with a hole in the ground.

The State of Michigan is receiving much notice both local and national about its attempts to promote green industry. Rescinding the Yard Waste Ban is inconsistent with this promotion. Eliminating an established compost industry for the purpose of revenue enhancement for the well greased landfill industry will not be sending an encouraging message to potential green industry investors. And please don't try to tell me that allowing landfills to take yard waste is simply allowing their industry to become green. Landfills are abominations upon the earth of this great State of Michigan. This is a fact that our Canadian neighbors well recognize. Landfills are the extermination camps of consumerism. Any attempt to justify rescission of the Yard Waste Ban with the claim that it is merely one of the landfill industry's steps to go green is as absurd as the concept of a Green Auschwitz or a Sustainable Dachau. One can call them Green or Sustainable, but they are still extermination camps and still landfills.

If you are truly set on rescinding the Yard Waste Ban, please do it in a way that benefits the taxpayer. You have been asked to gift the landfill industry with two revenue streams. The millions of dollars in increased tip fees and increased electrical generation sales will add a corresponding amount to their profits. This gift of windfall profits to an industry that is like boils upon the face of this beautiful state in a time of economic depression; will not, I think, go over well with the voters. A question the voters will surely ask is "Why is our legislature shutting down one industry and putting its employees out of work to bestow windfall profits on another apparently more favored industry?" If you are going to gift the landfills, then get something for the people of Michigan. Maybe you could allow the landfills to take Yard Waste, but enact a surcharge at a rate that would make compost facilities competitive with landfills. Bottom line is that the landfills will survive no matter what you do but composters won't.

I have come to Lansing today because of the personal satisfaction I have achieved by

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being part of the compost industry. I have been in a lot of different businesses over a lot of different industries. But, composting has been, by far, the occupation I have most enjoyed. I fully acknowledge the axiom that "Whatever the legislature giveth the legislature may taketh away." I am grateful that I was given by the legislature many years ago a chance to be part of a very rewarding industry. I am asking you not to taketh away. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,



William S. Wilson